

## Contact a Scleroderma Peer Mentor

Scleroderma Peer Mentors are available to talk to you on the phone, via email or in-person. See contact information inside of this brochure.

### Why Peer Mentors?

*"To try to help others avoid the feelings I experienced, or at least make them feel like they are not alone!!" – Sheri Hicks, mentor for the Scleroderma Program*

*"Life has changed drastically for me since my diagnosis. I still have many physical limitations, but have stabilized and make each day the best it can be with my new life (after scleroderma). There is life after diagnosis!" – Anita DeVine, mentor for the Scleroderma Program*



University of Michigan  
Health System

## University of Michigan Scleroderma Program

### Peer Mentoring

*"No matter how close you are to friends or how much you trust your medical team, nothing beats talking with someone who has walked in your shoes." Mary Alore, mentor for the Scleroderma Program*

University of Michigan Health System  
Rheumatology/Scleroderma Clinics  
1500 E. Medical Center Drive  
3<sup>rd</sup> Level Taubman Center  
Clinic Areas A & C  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

[www.med.umich.edu/scleroderma](http://www.med.umich.edu/scleroderma)

## Peer Mentor Program

The Peer Mentoring Program, in conjunction with the medical team, is designed to empower patients with Scleroderma to take control of their lives and their health care. Some of the roles they play are to:

- Role model
- Share information
- Provide empathic listening
- Help clarify values
- Aid in problem solving
- Help relieve anxiety
- Legitimize feelings

Peer Mentors help patients face issues of the disease. They help patients think through alternatives, cope with depression and anger that are natural to the process. They are positive role models who provide hope, encouragement and understanding.

Contact a Scleroderma Peer Mentor today. All conversations are kept in strict confidence. Peer Mentors are volunteers of the University of Michigan Health System and have been trained through the Patient and Family Centered Care Program of UMHS.

If you are interested in becoming a Peer Mentor or would like to make a donation to the program, please feel free to contact Ann Murphy, Scleroderma Program Manager at [annmurph@med.umich.edu](mailto:annmurph@med.umich.edu) or (734) 232-2104.

### Meet our Scleroderma Peer Mentors:



**Mary Alore**  
Email: [sbalore@gmail.com](mailto:sbalore@gmail.com)  
Phone: 248-797-8251

I was diagnosed with scleroderma in October, 2011. I have been blessed to have the great doctors at the U of M Scleroderma Program help me along this journey. My first symptoms appeared in January, 2011. After many months and many doctor visits, I was referred to the UMHS. My hope is to help others going through this disease. There is hope that we can share. Nobody should go through this alone.



**Anita DeVine**  
Email: [adevine747@aol.com](mailto:adevine747@aol.com)  
Phone: 248-642-6350

2007 was a rough year. It began with extreme fatigue, swelling in my hands and feet and shortness of breath. After several weeks of testing and steroid treatment, I was getting worse. My husband insisted that I go to the emergency room, where subsequently I was hospitalized and went downhill quickly. My organs (kidneys, heart, lungs) were failing and I was far too complex for that hospital to care for me. I was thankfully transferred by ambulance to U of M. After a very stormy few weeks, I was diagnosed with acute crisis scleroderma which I was lucky to survive-thanks to the U of M doctors and staff.

Hopefully, my story compels others who find themselves diagnosed with scleroderma to get their care from the true scleroderma specialists- those at the University of Michigan.



**Sheri Hicks**  
Email: [sheri.hicks@gmx.com](mailto:sheri.hicks@gmx.com)  
Phone: 520-247-0861

While I was living in Tuscon, Arizona, and tending to our 1-year-old son, I began to notice painful ulcers on my fingertips. As the ulcers persisted, they became unbearable. It would be another long and painful year before I got any answers. In January 2007, doctors were finally able to link my painful swollen fingers to scleroderma. I could hardly pronounce it, let alone understand it. I knew I couldn't ignore it. I had to set boundaries for myself and even had to teach myself a really important word: no.

After reaching a point of exhaustion, we relocated to Michigan to be with family and friends. It's nice to be around other people that understand the disease especially since, to most people, I don't look sick.

I can't work. I love people; I'm a people person. I want to make a difference in people's lives. On this journey, I'm still going to make a difference in people's lives.